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ABSTRACT

This report describes a self-contained, problem-centered workshop designed to help parents, especially undereducated parents, learn how to facilitate the elementary school success of their children. The workshop is predicated on the belief that parents themselves are able to identify the educational needs and help to solve the school-related problems of their children. Consequently, the 17 activities that comprise the workshop are dialogic, rather than didactic, in nature. The complete workshop is designed to be offered in four two-hour sessions by a facilitator (teacher) who has received no special training beyond a thorough understanding of the handbook offered with the workshop materials. This technical report describes the development and evaluation of the workshop. Section 1 provides information about content and format and describes how decisions relating to those issues were made. Section 2 describes the field test and formal evaluation of the completed workshop. The first appendix depicts the table of contents from the workshop handbook, and thereby defines the content of the course. The following appendixes contain the subjects' unedited reactions (overwhelmingly positive) to the workshop. (KC)

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P. L. A. C. E. S.

Parents Learning to Assist Children in the Elementary School: A Workshop for Parents

TECHNICAL REPORT

by

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And

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Introduction

Parents Learning to Assist Children in the Elementary School (PLACES) is a self-contained, problem-centered workshop designed to help parents, especially undereducated parents, learn how to facilitate the elementary school success of their children. The workshop is predicated on the belief that parents themselves are able to identify the educational needs and help to solve the school-related problems of their children. Consequently, the seventeen activities which comprise the PLACES workshop are dialogic, rather than didactic, in nature. The complete workshop is designed to be offered in four two-hour sessions by a facilitator (teacher) who has received no special training beyond a thorough understanding of the PLACES Handbook. The handbook contains everything needed to offer the workshop including:

- Complete directions for the facilitator. Each activity is accompanied by a guide page which assists the facilitator in leading the group discussion. In addition, the appendix includes suggestions for the planning and overall management of the workshop.

- Specific directions for producing and assembling all necessary instructional materials from masters contained in the handbook.

This Technical Report describes the development and evaluation of the workshop. Section I provides information about content and format, and describes how decisions relating to those issues were made. Section II describes the field test and formal evaluation of the completed workshop. Appendix A depicts the table of contents from the PLACES Handbook, and thereby defines the content of the course. Appendices B, C, and D contain the subjects' unedited reactions to the workshop.

Section I: Development of the Workshop

Rationale

All parent education programs have two common goals. The indirect, long-term goal is the promotion of the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of children. The direct, short-term goal is the enhancement of parental competence in order that parents can help to foster the continuing development of their children. Many previous parent education efforts have been designed almost entirely in terms of intended long-term goals (i.e., the desired impact on children) without considering the special learning needs of the parents themselves. As a result, many undereducated adults fail to participate in parent education programs designed for the larger community, and a large number of people who genuinely need parent education are not being reached.

This problem is especially disturbing for parent education programs whose primary indirect goal is the promotion of school success. There is growing evidence that the academic achievement of children is related to the academic achievement of parents (Sartain, 1981) and that illiteracy is not only culturally induced but cyclical. Hunter and Harman (1979) conclude:

> Simply put, poor parents are likely to have less schooling than well-to-do parents. Their children, in turn, have less schooling than the children of the middle and upper classes, and less potential for upward social and economic mobility. (p.48)

If we, as adult educators, are committed to the ideals of universal literacy and equal educational opportunity, we must extend our instructional efforts to include a parent education component which can help academically deficient adults to help their children succeed in school. No longer can we be satisfied with combating the educational deficiencies of today's adult population. We must attempt to prevent undereducation and illiteracy among tomorrow's adults.

Guidelines for Disseminability

The goal of the project was to develop a workshop which would become a vital and widespread component of adult and community education programs throughout the state. The workshop, then, had to be designed not only for optimal education efficacy, but also for maximal disseminability. This latter consideration necessitated the early establishment of guidelines to direct development activities -- guidelines based largely on the chronically limited resources available to adult education programs for innovative programming. Those guidelines were:

1) Given that most programs are unable to devote resources to specialized staff training, a workshop requiring a formally trained facilitator is not likely to be widely adopted. Therefore, facilitator training should be informal and self-directed, relying on written materials published as part of a total curriculum packet.

2) Given that most programs have limited materials budgets, all necessary instructional materials should be inexpensive and, if possible, reproducible at the learning site.

3) Again, given a limited materials budget, audio-visual presentations, which require special equipment and costly rental/reproduction, should be avoided.

4) Given that programs vary considerably in respect to operating hours, the workshop should allow for flexible scheduling.

5) Given that adult learners have only limited time to devote to education, and that the workshop is intended to extend and complement, but not supplant, basic skills instruction, a condensed, intensive format is to be preferred over a more protracted endeavor.

All of these guidelines were followed in developing the workshop, and are reflected in, and in fact dictated the design of, the PLACES Handbook.

Format of the Workshop

In order to determine the format of the workshop, group and individual interviews were conducted with six adult basic skills instructors. The group interview took the form of a brainstorming session addressing five basic issues of format:

- instructional methods
- group size
- group composition
- number of sessions
- length of sessions

During the group interviews, consensus was reached on each of the five issues. The individual interviews, which were conducted after the group session, provided an opportunity for the elaboration of ideas and the refinement of tentative decisions.

Based on the results of the interviews with practitioners, coupled with the guidelines set forth in the preceding section, the following final decisions concerning format were made:

1) Instructional method. Focused group discussion, with the emphasis on problem-solving and rule-generation, is the exclusive instructional method of the PLACES workshop. This is not merely a philosophical preference; parenting is a complex activity with many different routes to success. It is impossible to prescribe "correct" behavior unless that behavior is so widely practiced as to be obvious. Group discussion respects individual and cultural differences and allows participants to clarify their values, refine and articulate their positions on critical issues, and use their own experiences and environments as learning resources.

2) Group size. Groups will be kept small enough to allow each parent to participate, yet large enough to support discussion activities. The PLACES Handbook suggests a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve.

3) Group composition. The PLACES workshop is designed for undereducated parents. Although, in group discussion, the group rather than the materials tends to set the intellectual pace, the problems posed in the workshop would probably not be challenging to highly educated parents.

4) Number of sessions. The workshop has four sessions.

5) Length of sessions. Each session is two hours long. In addition, there are three homework assignments.

Content of the Workshop

The content of the PLACES workshop was determined through in-depth interviews with six undereducated parents and a group interview with four elementary school teachers. The purpose of the interviews with parents was three-fold: 1) to determine what they knew and did not know about the educational process and, more specifically, about their children's schools, 2) to discover how and to what degree they managed the home environment to support learning, and 3) to explore their attitudes toward schooling and dealing with the school. The interviews with undereducated parents revealed many educational needs, including lack of understanding in respect to the following:

- exactly what goes on in an elementary classroom
- what it means to be classified
- the need for structuring the home environment to facilitate learning
- how to interact with teachers
- what test scores and report cards mean
- how to set reasonable expectations for their children's school performance

For the group interview with elementary school teachers, participants were informed of the format decisions which already had been made, and asked what the content of the workshop should be. That question required that they consider not only what they would like to see parents learn but also what is "teachable" within the constraints of the chosen format. Among other things, the elementary school teachers indicated that they would like to see the workshop include:

- Information about the purpose and importance of parent/teacher conferences. Parents need to know why they should attend, how they should prepare for conferences and how they can act on the information provided by teachers.
- A segment emphasizing the importance of prompt and regular school attendance. Parents need to understand the educational consequences of excessive latenesses and unwarranted absences.

Additional information to guide content selection was provided by a reexamination of the data from the interviews with adult educators described in the preceding section. Adult educators point to two major contributions that could be made by such a curriculum:

- Parents would learn to properly and effectively interact with teachers and other school personnel. Many undereducated parents, who by definition have been unsuccessful in dealing with their own early school experiences, are uncomfortable in interacting with their children's schools, and thus avoid or delay such interactions, often at the expense of their children's learning.
- Parents would develop the instrumental skills which will allow them to communicate with their children's schools. For example, parents must be able to comprehend the forms and report cards routinely sent home by the local district.

The data from the three sets of interviews was then integrated, and the points of intersection -- the things that parents did not know, that elementary school teachers thought were important, and that would fit the format suggested by adult educators -- were compiled into a list of topics to serve as the basis for workshop content.

Activities were then written and grouped into four sections representing the workshop's four sessions. In its final form, the workshop consists of 17 activities -- an introductory activity, a core of 12 mandatory activities, and four optional activities. The table of contents from the PLACES Handbook succinctly defines the content of the workshop and is reproduced here as Appendix A. Each activity consists of a participant's page to serve as a stimulus for group discussion and a guide page to assist the facilitator in conducting the activity. The overall reading grade level of the participant materials is 4.0 (computed using the Fry Graph).

Pilot Test

Once the activities were developed, a pilot workshop was conducted at the Matawan-Aberdeen Adult High School Learning Center. The purposes for the pilot test were 1) to learner-test the participant materials, 2) to determine the adequacy of the guide pages, and 3) to adjust the timing of activities. The pilot sessions were taped, the facilitator provided both written and oral feedback, and the learners were telephoned for their reactions. Based on these three sources of information, the workshop's materials were refined, finalized, and printed.

Section II: Evaluation of the Workshop

Field Test Sites

For the purpose of evaluating the workshop, two field test sites were selected: New Brunswick Adult Learning Center and Paterson Adult Learning Center. Sites were selected based on their willingness to participate and their ability to obtain adequate sample sizes for the evaluation. In order that the evaluation could function as a test not only of the educational efficacy but also of the disseminability of the workshop, an attempt was made to identify sites which were dissimilar in terms of program structure and geographical setting. The chief differences are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of Field Test Sites

Characteristic	Site	
	New Brunswick	Paterson
Population of city	41,442	137,970
Percent minority in city	37%	49%
Size of city	5.5 sq. mi.	8.4 sq. mi.
Program structure	dispersed sites	central site
Operating hours	days and evenings	days

At each field test site, three complete workshops were offered by a single facilitator. For the sake of ecological validity, project staff participated in planning the workshops only to the extent necessary to ensure systematic data collection. Matters of staffing, recruitment, and scheduling were left to the discretion of the local directors and their staffs, a situation which increased the number of differences between the field test sites. Table 2 describes the workshops offered at the two sites.

Table 2

Characteristics of the Workshops at the Two Field Test Sites

Chacteristic	Site	
	New Brunswick	Paterson
Total number of participants*	26	39
Average number of participants in each workshop	8.7	13.0
Number of participants completing at least three of the four sessions**	21 (81%)	34 (87%)
Number of participants recruited from the learning center population	7 (27%)	39 (100%)
Number of participants recruited from the community at large	19 (73%)	0 (0%)
Number of minority participants	21 (81%)	39 (100%)
Number of female participants	23 (88%)	38 (97%)
Participants' average number of children	1.8	1.3
Average age of participants' children	8.8	6.7
Workshop schedule	once/week for 4 weeks	twice/week for 2 weeks
Workshop meeting time	2 day groups 1 evening group	3 day groups
Race of facilitator	White	Black
Faciltator's employment status	part time	full time
Facilitator's parental status	parent	not a parent

* These figures represent all those who registered for the workshop and attended the first session.

** Attendance at each site was hampered by severe winter storms; in one instance, the learning center was closed and the session had to be rescheduled.

Data Collection

The keystone of the evaluation was a telephone survey of participants conducted before and after the workshop. The pre-workshop interview consisted of 13 questions which served as a pretest (depicted in Table 3) and a question asking why the participant enrolled for the workshop. The post-workshop interview repeated exactly the 13 questions in Table 3 (now serving as a posttest) and included three questions soliciting learners' reactions to the workshop.

A total of 119 interviews (65 pre and 54 post) were completed by a team of nine interviewers. The average duration of the interviews was 20.2 minutes, and an average of 2.4 attempts were necessary to make telephone contact with the respondents. No attempts were made to conduct post-workshop interviews with the 10 participants (five at each site) who attended less than three of the four workshop sessions; these participants were considered non-completers and dropped from the study population. Of the 55 completers, only one was unable to be contacted (after twelve attempts) for a post-workshop interview; consequently, the response rate for the post-workshop interview was 98%. The usable N's for the study samples were 21 (New Brunswick) and 33 (Paterson).

All interview questions were open-ended and written to reflect the problem-centered format of the workshop. Interviewers were instructed to record responses verbatim. For the sake of reliability, in respect to interviewing style, recording, and transcription, the same interviewer conducted each respondent's pre and post interview.

Facilitator reactions to the workshop and to workshop materials were collected by means of a written rating forms. A separate form was prepared for each session; since the facilitators each conducted three workshops, they were instructed to complete the form for each session immediately after they had conducted that session for the third time. Taken together, the four rating forms provided each facilitator with the opportunity to rate each of the 17 activities (plus an orientation activity) in the following format:

1) How adequate were the participants' pages?	(low)	1	2	3	4	(high)
2) How adequate were the guide pages?		1	2	3	4	
3) What was the level of participant interest?		1	2	3	4	
4) What is your overall rating of this activity?		1	2	3	4	

Demographic data on participants was collected by the local programs at the time of enrollment.

Learner Growth

The type of learner growth expected from participation in the PLACES workshop is difficult, if not impossible, to assess validly using conventional paper-and-pencil pre and post tests. Effective parenting requires a constellation of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior which can take many forms and still lead to success. Except in the most extreme cases, it is difficult (and somewhat presumptuous) to make absolute decisions about the "correctness" of parenting. Yet such "correctness" decisions are a

Table 3

Pre and Post Interview Questions

1. Most parents want their children to be successful in school. In your opinion, what does it mean to be successful in the elementary school? How can you tell if your child is a successful student?

2. Do you think it is important to talk with your children about school? (IF YES) Why do you think it is important? What kinds of things can you find out? (IF NO) Why don't you think it is important?

3. Here is something that actually happened to a mother we know. How should she have handled this problem? The teacher sent the mother a note saying that her daughter did not hand in her homework. Her daughter claimed that she did hand in her homework. What should that mother have done?

4. Describe to me where and when each of your elementary school children does his/her homework. Do you think this is a good way for them to do their homework? Why or why not?

5. Do you ever help your elementary school children with their homework? (IF YES) How do you know when they need your help? How do you help them? What kinds of things can you do? (IF NO) Why don't you help? Does anybody else help? Who?

6. Do you think that when children are absent from school or late getting to school that their school work suffers? Why do/don't you think so?

7. How do you make sure that your elementary school children get to school on time?

8. Most parents allow children to stay home when they are sick. Can you think of any other reasons why you would allow your children to miss school? (IF YES) What are they?

9. Tell me how you would handle this problem. Your child is failing math. You know that he/she is trying very hard. When you talk to the teacher, she tells you that there is nothing that she can do to help you solve the problem. What would you do?

10. Most schools have regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Do you think that they are important? Why or why not?

11. What kinds of things should parents do <u>to prepare for</u> a parent-teacher conference?

12. What kinds of things should parents make sure they do <u>at</u> a parent-teacher conference?

13. What kinds of things should parents do <u>after</u> a parent-teacher conference?

necessary prerequisite of selected-response test construction; in those few cases where prescriptive judgments can be made with confidence (e.g., children should do their homework), the social desirability of the correct response presents a major threat to the validity of any conventional test. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the academic deficiencies of the study population preclude a written, free-response test.

Ultimately, a procedure was developed to assess learner growth which, if unparsimonious, obviates the problems discussed above. The procedure can best be described in chronological order.

1) Pre-workshop interviews. In telephone interviews conducted during the two weeks before the first session of the workshop, respondents were asked 13 questions (see again Table 3) about parental knowledge, attitudes, and behavior which can affect the school success of children. Verbatim responses were recorded and transcribed.

2) Post-workshop interviews. In telephone interviews conducted during the two weeks following the final session, respondents were asked the same 13 questions by the same interviewer. Again, verbatim responses were recorded and transcribed.

3) Data preparation. The 108 sets of responses (54 pre, 54 post) were assigned random numbers. The responses to each question were then typed into a single randomized listing so that it was impossible, based on position or handwriting, to distinguish whether a response was from a pre or post interview, which two responses belonged to a single respondent, or which interviewer had conducted and transcribed the interview. This step resulted in 13 separate listings of responses, one for each question.

4) Scoring of responses. Each response was then scored holistically, using a six point scale (with '1' low and '6' high). Scores were assigned on the basis of the degree to which such a response was likely to maximize the school success of the parent's elementary school children.

   Two scorers were selected based on their expertise and experience: both scorers were former elementary school teachers, were parents whose children had already succeeded in the elementary school, and had master's degrees in education. As a safeguard to validity, neither scorer was affiliated with the project and neither had seen the workshop materials or been informed of the workshop's content.

   The scoring process for each question included a training exercise during which the scorers read and discussed the interview question and then calibrated their judgments by scoring and discussing responses from the non-completers' pre-workshop interviews (which do not otherwise figure in this evaluation). After each training session, each scorer independently scored each of the 108 responses to that question.

   In total, each scorer assigned 1404 scores (13 questions x 54 respondents x 2 interviews). When the two independently assigned

scores for a given response differed by two or less, those scores were considered to be in agreement. Based on this scheme, scorers agreed on 1392 (99.2%) of the 1404 responses. Of the 12 responses on which the scorers disagreed (and in each case the scores differed by exactly three points), no two were on the same question and no two were on the same respondent. Consequently, the expense of mediating these scores by means of a third reviewer was deemed unwarranted. The inter-scorer correlation on total interview scores (the sum of the scores assigned to the responses to the 13 questions on interview) was .85 (N = 108).

Finally, each of the 1404 responses was assigned a score equal to the sum of the two independently assigned scores.

5) Aggregating scores. Test scores were calculated by simply summing the 13 response scores for each of the 108 interviews. Finally, scores were sorted by administration (pre vs. post), by respondent, and by site.

The end product of this five step procedure was a valid and reliable pre and post score for each of the 54 workshop completers.

Because adult learners are not a captive population, it was not possible to employ a control group in evaluating learner growth. Instead, a single group pre-post design with replication was employed, with the participants at the two field test sites serving as replication groups. This design is especially appropriate for this evaluation, since successful replication with diverse groups suggests generalizability, and for the purposes of this evaluation, disseminability.

A dependent t-test (one-tailed) was employed to analyze gains on the 13-item test for each of the replication groups. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Pre and Post Test Scores for Two Replication Groups

		Pretest		Posttest			
Group	N	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
New Brunswick	21	89.6	10.6	102.5	9.0	4.6	.0001
Paterson	34	84.7	9.1	95.5	7.9	7.5	.0001

As can be seen in Table 4, both groups exhibited highly significant learner growth. For each group, the posttest mean is more than a standard deviation above the pretest mean. Although there are no similar programs with which to compare the magnitude of improvement, there can be little doubt that the increase is educationally meaningful.

Facilitator Ratings

After the facilitators had taught a given session three times, they rated each activity in that session in respect to 1) the adequacy of the participants' pages, 2) the adequacy of the guide pages, 3) the level of participant interest, and 4) the overall quality of the activity. A four point scale was used, with '1' low and '4' high. The mean (across activities) rating for each category was calculated for the total workshop and for the core activities (i.e., not including the orientation, the introductory activity, and the four optional activities). The means are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5

Facilitators' Mean Ratings of Four Aspects of Workshop Activities

	Total Workshop		Core Activities	
Aspect	N*	M	N*	M
Participants' pages	29	3.5	22	3.6
Guide pages	33	3.6	26	3.7
Participant interest	29	3.3	22	3.4
Overall quality	29	3.3	22	3.4

*Refers to the number of independent ratings; N's vary due to the facts that some of the optional activities were not rated, and that two of the homework activities required two distinct guide pages.

As can be seen in Table 5, all aspects of the workshop received mean ratings at the upper end of the four point scale, with the critically important core activities rated slightly but consistently higher than the workshop taken as a whole. A total of 142 ratings were assigned; of these, 123 (87%) were '3' or '4'. The two facilitators gave the same rating 46% of the time, differed by one 48% of the time, and differed by two 6% of the time.

Learner Reactions

The post-workshop interview included three questions asking about 1) satisfaction with the workshop, 2) changes in parent behavior, and 3) changes in parent confidence. The actual questions, along with the 54 completers' unedited responses, appear as Appendices B, C, and D, respectively.

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* Reprinted from PLACES Handbook.

Learners' Responses to Question 1 on the Post-Workshop Interview

QUESTION: Did you like the course? Why or why not?
What was the single most important thing you learned in the course? *

1. Yes. Because I learned a lot of ways to help my children. Some people think that being violent will make your children behave, but violence only makes it worse. I learned a lot of ways to talk to my children. I learned how to deal with their problems better. To find out if your child has a problem with his or her work how to help him.

2. Yes. I loved the course. Very interesting. I learned how kids behave, how to get child's opinion, how to participate more.

3. Yes, because it brought different points of view and some things I didn't know. I thought it was really great. I learned about some services like study teams. My daughter has a discipline problem but she is a good student. I learned to set rules and to make lists before conferences. That there is help if you need it.

4. Yes. I learned a lot. I learned about how to deal with children and teachers. To tell the truth before I took the course I didn't know what to ask the teachers at conferences. I didn't know how to set up rules.

5. Yes. I learned about all the new ideas. I had some ideas before but it was interesting because people brought new ideas like the child study team.

6. It was real nice. It was more education for me. I learned lots about my child at school and mostly about each other. To know more about your child at school.

7. Very nice. Very educational. Learned some things I wasn't already aware of. Gave me more insights into many things. It was also helpful to hear the interchange between mothers. The section which made me understand what is most important for child's success. My answers were different than most.

8. Yes, because the course helped me deal with my children. The most important thing was that children have feelings and should be treated a certain way.

9. Yes! I enjoyed it tremendously. I wished it didn't end. It helped to know other people have the same problems as you do.

10. Yes. I liked it because there were some things that I didn't understand that I became enlightened about. I think the most important thing was learning how to converse with the child.

---

* Responses to this sub-question are underlined.

11. Yes. It taught me lots of things I didn't know before like asking the child questions. When you find out child is having a problem you don't understand, like I mentioned before, you can talk to a doctor and find out if there is another reason for the problem. Asking them what they learned during the day and about the teacher and what the teacher taught them during the day.

12. Yes, because it teached me how to talk to the teacher. Before I didn't know how to do it the right way. I learned about the progress of my child. Like if the child had a problem, I learned to make a conference with the principal, teacher, and the child study team.

13. Yes. It was very interesting. There were a lot of things involved in the course. To me the most important thing was in dealing with the children and helping them understand their problems.

14. Yes. I liked it because I learned things that I didn't know before like writing down a question before seeing the teacher. How to help my children do their school work.

15. Yes. It helped me to help my kids more, especially my daughter. She can't read so good and now I can help her. Knowing more about my kids.

16. Yes. I learned a lot more things to help my children. The most important thing is what I have to do if the children have a problem.

17. Yes. Set time for children to study, how to talk with teacher, place to study.

18. Yes. I learned so many things. I learned if there is anything I want to ask the teacher I should make a list so I won't forget.

19. Yes, because it was . . . like we discussed the problems other women have and I compared myself to them. How to go to the school and talk to the teacher.

20. Very much. I learned a lot I didn't know about the school and about my kids and about how I can help them.

21. Yes, very much. You get to talk to other parents and see what they're doing. You share what you know and learn what they know. You get to talk about your kids. Not to be afraid to talk to the teacher. To go to see her when I feel there is a problem.

22. Yes. I found out different parents' views on different subjects such as toward education and so on. That the teacher or the principal doesn't have the final say in your child's education. That you can always take it to a higher source.

23. Yeah. It was O.K., but very basic. Not too much new. Nothing. It was very, very basic, repetitious.

24. Yes. Some things were new to some of the parents. I learned how to handle common problems like what I'd do if the teacher said my child didn't hand in homework and the child said see did. Communicating with the teacher.

25. I like the course because now I can better figure out how to deal with my kids. Especially how to go about helping them when they have problems in school like not doing their homework.

26. Yes. It gave me an opportunity to see something I may have overlooked before. Learned how to help children, what to do for them. How to help the children.

27. Yes. I found out about the teachers and other parents and what they are learning.

28. Yes, very instructive, gave good information. Helped me to work with my children.

29. Yes. It was a chance to discuss the individual points of view and have a difference of opinion and to help our children achieve. Each child is an individual -- no 2 persons are alike. You have to listen to the children and let them express themselves and you have to set rules and live by them. To help our children.

30. Very much. I needed to know how to make sure my daughter would succeed in school. I got pointers from other parents and from the book.

31. Yes. It was fun talking with the group. I learned all different things about the school. I didn't know about child study teams, preparing for conferences. Child study team.

32. Yes, because I learned about how to help kids and how to help them succeed. How to get child to study, how to help them with any problems they have, help them with any difficult situations.

33. Yes, everyone seems to have problems and we worked them out together. Everybody has a different way of doing things and we would compare answers.

34. Yes. Well, there are a lot of things. I learned about program and child, I learned about the teachers and homework, how to talk with teachers. I learned about communication with other parents. What's going on with them and with me -- sharing information.

35. Yes. I learned things I never thought of before especially from other people. How to express myself better. I learned if something happens I can call the teacher in advance. I also learned to make rules. To be able to call the teacher about a problem.

36. Yes, because I found that other parents were having the same problems. We discussed these problems. This helped me make the right decisions. About the conference, it is important to go even if child isn't having problems.

37. Yes. Lots of things. I learned about my kids. Problems with kids in school, problems with homework. I learned how to ask questions at a parent-teacher conference -- I write my questions down. I learned that if the teacher writes you a note you really had to respond, because if you don't the teacher will think you don't care. To let the teacher know that you care.

38. Yes, I did. It was very interesting and it helped me look at different things as far as my children's school work is concerned. The most important thing that I learned was to make child do homework right after school.

39. Yes, I liked the course. I learned a lot about how to deal with my 6-year-old son -- my other children are older. How to talk with teacher. How to deal with teacher.

40. Yes. It was a group course so I got to hear the problems other people have. Some other people brought up problems similar to mine and I couldn't express before -- problems that I didn't even think about -- some that I should have been looking into. I learned a lot. To better prepare myself to deal with the kids. I learned to schedule better and to set rules and regulations. We had some before but they are a little more organized now. The kids helped me to get to the rules -- we set them together. Homework right after school without TV.

41. Yes. I got to share feelings with other parents and the teachers and find out best tactics to ask to help children in school. To deal better with my daughter and to realize her feelings. I got to know more about her with the interview we did on our children.

42. Yes, because it helped me a lot to realize what teachers and students are doing there. About the teachers' conference. Writing down notes before to ask teacher.

43. Yes. Because I learned a lot from the group that I didn't know before. I also found out that other people felt the way I did. The setting down rules for the whole family as far as school and homework.

44. Yes, very much. I was able to hear other mothers' opinions and mine and see my wrongs and rights. To have more patience with children and how it is important to talk with them instead of screaming and hitting them. Patience!

45. Yes. Enjoyable to sit around and talk with other parents to see what's good with them about their children. I'd recommend the course. I guess setting rules about homework habits.

46. Yes. It enlightened me about new things to do to help the children. I learned how to find out from the child about school and to ask them about school -- like how they get along with their teachers, and especially what they learned. I especially liked when we discussed the problems of the child not learning.

47. Yes. I learned so much. It was very important to take that course because I learned how to treat my daughters about the school. How to talk with them, not fighting with them. Before, I started fighting with her because she didn't do her homework and about what she was doing in school. Now she talks to me and explains how she feels and I understand how she feels about school.

48. Yes, well I felt that it was good because I got a chance to compare how I was handling things with other parents. I know where to start. I learned different ways to handle situations about school and my child at home.

49. Yes. In this course I learned new ideas for helping my children. Before in school I can't help my daughter. I can't help the teacher because I can't communicate. After the course I learned how I can communicate. Different rules for helping children with homework.

50. Yes. It helped me with things I'm already doing. But I put them into action more. I picked up things from other parents. To try to have good communication with kids. To talk with them, not at them.

51. Yes. I got to talk to other parents whose children have the same problems mine do. I know I'm not alone. You know other people have the same problems and ways to handle those problems. Your child is not unique.

52. Yes. I learned a lot of things about the kids and it makes you wonder. Getting more involved with the child and the teacher, learning about problems and how you can help. Talking with the teacher, learning how to ask about problems.

53. Yes. The atmosphere was nice. I liked the way the teacher conducted the course -- let you talk to other parents. The idea of taking the time to talk with your child.

54. Yes. I learned very much. I already did many things we learned about in the course. That the school and parents work together.

Learners' Responses to Question 15 on the Post-Workshop Interview

QUESTION: Now that you've taken the course, are you doing anything new or different to make sure your child(ren) succeed(s) in school?

(IF YES) What are you doing now that you didn't do before taking the course?

1. Yes. Well, I made up new rules. I asked them (my children) what they thought of the rules. Some they didn't like but I told them they had to make an effort to carry them out.

2. Yes. Check homework after it's done. Set rule for bed time: 9:00 p.m. Mon. - Fri., 10:00 p.m. week-ends.

3. Yes. To try to set up rules and follow them - rules about homework and make sure she gets to bed on time. I know she gets homework and I am checking it more.

4. Yes. I went to a parent-teacher conference. I'm planning now for their programs. Plus I work with them at home.

5. Well, no I don't think so. Most of the things they say to do in the course I do already.

6. Yes. I'm helping him to get there on time and making sure he does all his work and especially no fighting.

7. Yes. I'm keeping closer tabs on homework, when it's due. Keeping tabs on testing, what's coming up so I can keep her primed.

8. Yes. I changed some homework routines. I try to make sure I am talking with her, not at her.

9. No, not with my younger ones. But yes I am limiting calls with my high schooler.

10. Well, most of the things we talked about I was already doing. I'm not really doing anything new.

11. Some. I'm making rules and regulations to follow, especially about homework. I'm making a better place to study. I give more encouragement to get them there on time. I go to parent-teacher conferences to find out what they are doing in school.

12. Yes. I let them know the rules I made and they are following the rules. Plus, I tell my daughter to read 15 minutes everyday.

13. Yes. We're making particular rules. The important thing out of this is that we have good rules and we're trying to improve ourselves. We're putting these rules to work.

14. Yes. Well, I make new rules for the children.

15. Yes. Last week report cards came out. My daughter had bad grades. I went and talked to the teacher about it. She is going to get on my daughter's case and so am I. Before, I wouldn't go.

16. Yes. I'm making new rules. For example, they have to do their homework first if they want to watch T.V.

17. Yes. I set time for homework.

18. No.

19. Yes. Like I do my homework the same time my daughter does hers. We read magazines and newspapers together and I show her how to read magazines and newspapers.

20. Yes. I'm behind her more with her homework, to see she gets it done and that it's corrected before she goes to school. I make sure she does it -- we have new rules about homework.

21. Yes. Well, we talk a lot more, me and my daughter -- not only about school but about her friends and her problems. We made up rules, for homework mostly, and we follow them. About nine tenths of the time anyway.

22. Yes. Before I would come home and say, "You're not doing this or that." Now I say, "Your teacher feels you should be doing better." I talk to them differently.

23. Not really.

24. Yes. Pay attention to what they say about school. Talk with them. Ask things like what is the best thing you learned today.

25. Yes. I'm setting up rules to go by now and they must follow them or I'm cutting out some activities.

26. No. I have been doing all these things.

27. Yes. I stick to rules like doing homework before she goes out to play but mostly what they told me she pretty much does already.

28. Yes. I can help my son more now, help him with reading and practice. My children were going to bed too late, getting up late and then late for school. Now they go to bed earlier, get up earlier, on time for school. They have a place for school work and books. I'm going to buy a shelf.

29. Yes. Organizing to make sure if you have a set time to do things, make sure that they get done. Like get to bed on time. Reinforce things to do.

30. Yes. I keep in touch with the teacher more than I used to. I talk to my child more. I talk to other parents.

31. Yes, preparing carefully for a parent-teacher conference next week. (Respondent also said she would explore possibility of having a child evaluated by the child study team.)

32. Yes, I cut down their T.V. schedule. They don't go outside and play as much. I rearranged that schedule.

33. Yes. Making sure that I stay firm in what I do instead of slacking up.

34. Yes. Well, I guess it is mostly the same thing, organized better. Scheduling things, organizing things. Course was too short; met nice mothers. We talked and shared information. Course was really nice.

35. Yes. I used to let company come before my children finished homework, but now I make a rule that homework comes first.

36. Yes. It was two things that I needed to do bad. Develop a schedule for study time and homework. My husband and I and the kids sat down and worked out a schedule. Rules on phone calls. No calls during their study time. I take them to the library after I get home sometimes so they can study and do homework. This helps them with doing projects.

37. Yes. I make them do their homework at a certain time, go to bed a certain time and be up at a certain time.

38. Yes, well I didn't ask him everyday how and what he is doing in school. After taking the course, I do. I found out how important that is.

39. Yes. I help him more, spend time with him not only with homework. Made arrangements to take him to library.

40. Yes. We organized rules and I get a little more involved. I ask them about school, their work, their books. We go over the problems. The kids know I went to the class and the kids see I'm concerned and they can talk to me and I'm better able to deal with their problems and help.

41. Yes. I am making rules and regulations. Now I set time of 4:00 p.m. for homework. I have the rules written down and she can see them.

42. No.

43. Yes. I made new rules that everyone agreed with. We have family conferences too. I got the rules from the folder. We talk about school more.

44. Yes, I fixed my rules up. Now we have a certain time to do the homework and a certain time to go to sleep. We talk a little more now.

45. Yes. Before the course I'd let him go out and play and he would get tired but now I have him do his homework right away after school.

46. Yes. I'm more serious about what I already did before and I'll make more rules and I know what to do if they aren't doing well in school. I'm sticking closer to rules now.

47. Yes. I talk to the teacher and the principal about what I can do.

48. No, not really.

49. Yes, the course was very good for me -- a new experience. I liked the course. Some things were new, like making lists before the meetings.

50. Yes. I push myself more to make sure I'm doing the things I should do. I try harder.

51. Yes. I'm taking more time to talk to my child. I take more time on the homework. I check homework more.

52. No. I watch her and listen to her and we sit down and talk with her to see what she has to talk about and find out where her mind is going so you can guide her.

53. Yes. I try to question and talk with my child more. I try to put myself in her place.

54. Yes. I make some rules -- the time to study and they have to study everyday. If they don't do their homework they can't watch TV. They must get all their materials ready the night before, not wait until morning.

Learners' Responses to Question 16 on the Post-Workshop Interview

QUESTION: Since you've taken the course, do you think that, overall, you are better able to help your child(ren) succeed(s) in school? Why or why not?

1. Yes. Because a lot of things I didn't understand I understand now. I started spending more time with the one that needs more help. My oldest even helps him now. I tell them to tell me anything that's bothering them. I ask them everyday, "How was school today?" I enccurage them to be open. I found the sessions very helpful and I would attend another one if they had it.

2. Yes. I already had some rules. The course increased my ability to help her be successful.

3. Yes. It made me aware of what I should do. It brought out the responsibilities for enforcing the rules and being behind her. I know I have to reinforce these things.

4. Yes. There were a lot of things I was afraid to ask about. I didn't know how to approach a lot of things. Now if I have a problem, I go to the teacher. If the teacher can't help, I go to the principal.

5. Yes. I am better because in the course they tell you how to talk to the teacher if you're having a problem.

6. Yes. You can look over the list we got and can pick up from that too. How to talk to the teacher and solve problems with them and even how to punish the child.

7. Yes. More insight on what teacher has to deal with — 20 to 30 children to deal with. Thank teacher more.

8. Yes. Things that came up in the course are now clear to me. Things I didn't understand like problems my daughter was having with the teacher. I learned how to handle these problems now.

9. Yes. I just thought that the course was very good. I was disappointed that more parents didn't attend.

10. Yes. Because you get a chance to listen to other parents and it helps me think more about my relationship with my child.

11. Yes. I know and understand more how to go about doing things. I learned different approaches to use without hurting their feelings.

12. Yes. I learned to go talk to the teacher. And if it's a big problem, go talk to the principal.

13. Yes, I guess we are. Sometimes as parents we think we know everything. But taking these classes it showed us other things. It helps our minds to be more clear about how to handle our children's problems.

14. Yes. I learned new things that I didn't know before.

15. Yes. I can help her learn more now.

16. Yes. I talk with my children more. I am also talking to the teacher more.

17. Yes. I learned more about how to help my children.

18. Yes. Like I said, writing down what I want to ask the teacher so I don't forget.

19. Yes. I have a little more patience now. I was having the same problems and now I know how to handle the problems. Before, I used to just yell at her, but now I take it easy.

20. Yes, because I have learned a lot of things from the program that I didn't know before about helping her.

21. Yes. I understand more about her, more about the school. I always wanted to help her but now I know how. I'm better at it.

22. Yes. Because now I am more inclined to, instead of coming home and saying, "You're not doing this or that," I say, "Your teacher feels you could be doing better." I talk to them differently now and this is better.

23. I suppose. It was a refresher.

24. Yes. Learned different ways parents handle problems. Saw some of my own mistakes from different parents. Like my getting upset when they don't do well and comparing them with other kids.

25. Yes. I learned how to sit down and discuss problems. I go over their homework when they come home. I ask them if they want to talk about their homework. I sit around with them and see what they have learned.

26. Yes. Some areas I was not thinking about. It opened my eyes.

27. Yes. I can work on her bad attitude. She thinks she knows everything.

28. Yes. I didn't know how to help them. Be firm with rules.

29. Yes. Each child is different -- we talked about it and found solutions. I learned how to find solutions and solve some problems with my children.

30. Yes. Because I know more. I know what's going on in the school and in my child's mind and heart.

31. Yes. I know more about the school, parent-teacher conferences, child study teams, other things.

32. Yes, I learned quite a few things that I didn't know before. How to deal with teachers and how to help your child make better grades.

33. Yes, because now I know how to deal with their situation. I don't get totally upset when something is going wrong in school. I don't harrass him anymore. I remain calm and find out how to help him.

34. Well, I'm doing my best. What I am doing has improved. I am trying doing my best.

35. Yes. I learned that sometimes I need to be more stern and sometimes to be lenient.

36. Yes. One thing, the understanding and discussing what happens on a day-to-day basis. I learned to talk with them more from doing the interviews that we did as a class project. I learn a lot from them now. At first I thought I shouldn't get involved in the class. If you are not highly educated I thought I shouldn't be in that class. It really helped by sharing with other parents.

37. Yes, because if he have a problem he can come to me and now I know how to handle the problem now. The kids don't like the rules I set.

38. Yes! Well there were a lot of important things that I found out. Like if you are having a parent-teacher conference, you should jot down questions. These are the things that I found out, and they helped.

39. Yes. Knowing what he can and can't do.

40. Somewhat. They see I'm concerned and they bring their problems to me -- hopefully. One problem we've had is with one daughter who wants to do homework speedy and she doesn't check her work. I wish the course had a way to deal with that kind of problem.

41. I used to do things anyway to help her, but now I know things to do if she has any problems. Now I know the importance of rules.

42. Yes, I think so. I know more about what they have to go through and what the teacher has to go through. I have 2 kids; she (the teacher) has 30 sometimes. That's kind of hard, and they all are different.

43. Yes. I learned things I didn't learn before, like the papers the school sends home. I could get them as a book in the beginning of school. I also found out about the child study team services. I never knew about that. It was good to know about those services.

44. Yes, I feel I am helping them a lot more than I did before.

45. Yes. I'm more aware of how things should be done to give a positive reaction.

46. Yes. I know more about what to do. I'm going to register now myself in adult school and get my diploma.

47. Yes. Now I know in school they have a staff that can help the child improve if they have emotional or eye problems. They can find out what's the problem. I didn't know that.

48. Yes. I think I have better insight, because I talked with other parents and see how they handle things. I might have a few more options. I really enjoyed talking with other parents. Mainly some things about discipline and other problems that parents have about school.

49. Yes. I think now I can help more my daughter, because I can help now. I can know and understand the different problems from school. When there are problems, I can go to the teacher or principal. I know there are different ways to help.

50. Yes. I learned that I could do more than I was doing to help my kids succeed in school. I get them to read more. I follow through on things that I can help them.

51. Yes. I'm aware of other problems of other parents. I can anticipate problems and I'm prepared to handle them. Showing him I, too, had homework was good. He liked to help me with my homework. I enjoyed taking the course. The instructor was friendly and open. Got a chance to be relaxed. Not like a classroom.

52. I think so, because when I took the course it made me feel more interested in it -- in finding out what she is doing in school and about her, period.

53. Yes. I try to understand what goes on in that classroom everyday.

54. Yes. In my case, I found out I was doing okay. And writing down rules is better because they have no excuses.